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Dr. *CLARKE's*
SERMON

Preach'd at the

PARISH-CHURCH

OF

St *James's Westminster*,

ON

Sunday *April* 18, 1725.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

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UPON

Occasion of the Erecting a CHARITY-SCHOOL, as a House of EDUCATION for WOMEN-SERVANTS.

BY

SAMUEL CLARKE, *D. D. Rector of St* James's Westminster.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

MATT. V, 16.

Let your Light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.

LIGHT, in the firſt and *natural Senſe* of the word, is That which cauſes all things to *be Seen* as they *Are*, in their *True* Nature, and in their *Proper* Colours. 'Tis That which *diſcovers* every *Secret*, which *removes* every *Uncertainty*, which *detects* every *Deformity*, which *opens to us* in all their *Glory* the innumerable and inimitable *Beauties* of Nature. Hence in the *Figurative Senſe*, whatſoever

ever enables us to diſcover any *Truth*, we uſually ſpeak of as *giving us Light* in That matter: For, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, *Eph.* v, 13, *whatſoever doth make manifeſt, is Light.* And becauſe ſome things, the *more* they are *inlightened*, the *more Beautiful* they appear; whereas Other things love to have their *Deformities* concealed in *Darkneſs*: hence in the *Moral Senſe* alſo, whatever Actions or Perſons are truly *virtuous* and *praiſe-worthy*, and conſequently always the *more valuable* in proportion, as they are more perfectly and thoroughly *known*; are frequently in Scripture ſtiled by the name of *Light*, and the *contrary ones* by that of *Darkneſs*. Concerning *God himſelf*, upon account of the infinite Purity and Holineſs of his Nature, the Apoſtle thus ſpeaks; 1 *Joh.* i, 5, *God is* LIGHT, *and in Him is no Darkneſs at all.* And to good *Men* likewiſe, in *their* proportion, is the ſame manner of ſpeaking applied; *Eph.* v, 8, *Ye were ſometimes Darkneſs, but Now are ye* LIGHT *in the Lord: Walk, as children*

dren of Light: —— *And have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs, but rather reprove them.*

Again; Becauſe all Luminous Bodies, in proportion to the degree of their *own* Brightneſs, neceſſarily diffuſe their Light around them, and at a Diſtance inlighten all *Other* Bodies; hence, in the *religious* ſenſe, a *Good Example* is a *Light* ſhining in darkneſs; ſpreading its influence every way; diffuſing Inſtruction, Knowledge, Incouragement to Virtue, and Motives to reformation of Manners, in the midſt of a diſſolute and corrupt World. In *This ſenſe* the word is uſed by St. *Paul*, *Phil.* ii, 15; *That ye may be blameleſs, and harmleſs, the Sons of God, without rebuke, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe generation, among whom ye ſhine as* LIGHTS *in the World.* And in *This ſenſe* 'tis uſed by our Saviour in the Text; *Let your* LIGHT *ſo ſhine before men. Ye are* (ſaith he in the words immediately foregoing, *Ye are*) *the* LIGHT *of the World:* As therefore

fore *a City that is ſet on an hill, cannot be hid*; and as *men do not light a candle, and put it under a buſhel, but on a candleſtick, and it giveth Light unto all that are in the Houſe*; Even ſo, ſaith he, *let* YOUR LIGHT *ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven:* Let your whole Behaviour be ſo *exemplary*, and the Influence of your religion upon *your own Lives* ſo *conſpicuous* to the World; that men being thereby convinced of the *Excellency* of your doctrine, may by your Preaching be led from Errour to Truth, and be converted by your Example from Wickedneſs to Virtue.

'Tis well worth obſerving here, by the way, that This expreſſion of our Saviour, concerning men's *lighting a candle*, and putting it not under a Buſhel, but on a *Candleſtick*, ſo that *it giveth Light unto all that are in the Houſe*; is the Foundation of That lively and beautiful Image in St. *John*'s Viſion, where the ſeven primitive

tive Churches of *Aſia* are repreſented under the ſimilitude of *ſeven golden Candleſticks*; and the principal or moſt eminent perſons in thoſe ſeveral Churches, as ſo many *Stars* or *Lights* in thoſe *Candleſticks*, giving Light to the *Whole Temple* or *Catholick Church* of God.

And This concerning the *nature* of that *figurative* expreſſion, *Let your* LIGHT *ſo ſhine before men.*

The following words, *that men may ſee your good works, and* GLORIFY *your Father which is in Heaven,* are of very plain and obvious Meaning: That by the *Spreading* of your *Doctrine*, and by the *Influence* of your *Example*, the Practiſe of true Religion and Goodneſs may prevail in the World: That men may ſee the Beauty and Excellency of Virtue, and the infinite Benefit that would ariſe to Mankind from the univerſal Prevalency of true Religion: That they may be convinced of the neceſſity of reforming their

Manners, and of living under a conſtant Senſe of God upon their Minds, in expectation of a righteous judgment to come. The *Practiſe of Virtue* upon *Theſe Principles*, is the Eſtabliſhment of the *Kingdom of God* among Men. And in the *Inlargement* of *this Kingdom* of *Righteouſneſs* and *Holineſs*, in the *Increaſe* of the *Efficacy* of *Truth and Virtue*, which is the *Proper Subjection* of Rational and Free Agents; in *This* conſiſts the *Glory of God* upon Earth. Thus the *Converſion of Unbelievers*, which St *Paul* deſcribes by their being *convinced*, and *falling down on their Faces and worſhipping God*, 1 Cor. xiv, 24; St *Peter* expreſſes by the *ſame Phraſe* with *This* in the Text, of *glorifying God*: 1 *Pet.* ii, 12, *Having your converſation honeſt among the Gentiles; that, whereas they ſpeak againſt you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they ſhall behold,* GLORIFY GOD *in the day of Viſitation.* And St *John*, in his *Revelation*, uſes the expreſſion of men's *giving Glory to God*, and

repenting

repenting of their evil *deeds*, as words having one and the ſame ſignification: *Ch.* ix, 20; xvi, 9; *The reſt of the men, which were not killed by theſe plagues, yet* REPENTED NOT *of* —— *their Murders, nor of their Sorceries, nor of their Fornication, nor of their Thefts; but* —— *blaſphemed the Name of God, who hath power over theſe Plagues; and they* REPENTED NOT, *to give him* GLORY.

Glorifying of God therefore, and *promoting Righteouſneſs and Truth among Men*, being in effect *one* and the *ſame* thing: from hence appears the *Reaſon* and the *Conſiſtency* of our Lord's commanding his Diſciples in the Text, to *let their Light ſhine before men*; and yet exhorting them, in another part of the very ſame Diſcourſe, *ch.* vi, 1, *Take heed that ye* DO NOT *your Alms before men, to be ſeen of them; otherwiſe ye have no Reward of your Father which is in Heaven*: And, *When thou doſt thine alms, do not ſound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in*

the ſynagogues and in the ſtreets, that they may have glory of Men: Verily I ſay unto you, they have their Reward. The *Reaſon* (I ſay) and the *Conſiſtency* of *Both* theſe *Exhortations*, appears from the *peculiar* Conſiderations annexed to *each* exhortation reſpectively. The *Same* thing, in *different* Circumſtances, is *not* the *Same* thing. A *Particular good Action*, done with a *Particular View* of *vain-glory* and *popular Applauſe*; ceaſes to be a religious Action, and falls ſhort of its Reward. The *Same* Action performed with *ſuch* a View, and in *ſuch* a manner, as to have a direct and proper Tendency to *promote* and *incourage* the univerſal *Practice of Virtue* in the World; is, in the moſt *immediate* and *real ſenſe* of the words, a *glorifying of our Father which is in Heaven*; 'Tis cauſing men (as much as in Us lies,) to make acknowledgment of *God*, and to order their Lives as being under a perpetual ſenſe of his Inſpection and Government.

Every

Every Act of *Any* Virtue *whatſoever*, has a natural Tendency to *This* End; and in *general*, by *habitual* good Living, is the *Glory of God*, in *This ſenſe* of the phraſe, moſt highly advanced. But *Some* Virtues *in particular*, have a more *conſpicuous Influence* towards This End, than Others. And ſince in That paſſage which I *now referred to*, of the *ſame* Sermon of our Lord upon the Mount, 'tis agreed on all hands, that What, in the beſt Copies of the Original, is,

Take heed that ye do not your RIGHTEOUSNESS *before men*, Matt. vi, 1.

means undoubtedly, and is accordingly *rendered* in *Our* Tranſlation, *Take heed that ye do not your* ALMS *before men*: 'tis very probable that *here* in *my Text* likewiſe, our Lord, under the *general* terms, *Light* and *Good Works*, might have a *particular* regard to Works of *Beneficence and Charity*: Commanding his diſciples to make *conſpicuous* their Practiſe of the *ſame* Virtue, when their *ſo doing* might be an *Honour* to Religion; which, in

other

other circumſtances, he commands them to keep *private*, when its being *publick* would ſerve only the Purpoſes of Vain-glory.

And indeed there is no one Chriſtian virtue, to the Practiſe of which there are in Scripture given more *earneſt Exhortations*, or more *large and repeated Promiſes*, than to This of *Charity*. *Caſt thy Bread upon the Waters; for thou ſhalt find it after many days*, Eccleſ. xi, 1. If *thou deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are caſt out, to thy houſe: If when thou ſeeſt the naked, thou cover him; and hide not thy ſelf from thine own fleſh: Then ſhall thy Light break forth ——— in obſcurity, and thy darkneſs be as the noon-day*, Iſ. lviii, 7——10. In like manner, in the *New* Teſtament, our *Lord* exhorts: *When thou makeſt a Feaſt, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the Blind: And thou ſhalt be bleſſed; For they cannot recompenſe thee; for thou ſhalt be recompenſed*

ſed at the reſurrection of the Juſt, Luke xiv; 13, 14. And in his deſcription of the laſt judgment, he expreſſes the ſentence of the Bleſſed thus; *Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the World: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat, &c.* Matt. xxv, 34. And in his diſcourſe to the Phariſees, *Luke* xi, 41, *Give alms*, ſays he, *of ſuch things as ye have, and behold, all things are clean unto you.* His meaning is; not that *Charity*, or *Any* other Virtue, will compenſate for *vitious* and *immoral* Practiſes; but that Theſe Virtues are *really* acceptable before God, in whoſe ſight the Phariſaical ceremonious Purifications were of no Eſteem.

It muſt and ought here to be acknowledged, to the Honour of the Preſent Generation, that there appears to be *at This time* among us a number of perſons ſo charitably diſpoſed, and ſo ready to make a good Uſe of the Plenty wherewith the Providence

Providence of God has bleſſed them; that, were it poſſible they could be abſolutely certain, their charity ſhould always be *expended* in ſuch ways, and applied to ſuch purpoſes only, for which it was deſigned; ſo as neither to become in any degree an encouragement to *Idleneſs*, nor a ſupport of any *Party*, nor an occaſion of *Pride*, or of raiſing perſons *Above* thoſe Circumſtances in which they might be imployed moſt uſefully to the Publick: it cannot at all be doubted, but the Supply would immediately be *more* than is requiſite, to relieve the truly indigent, and to anſwer the wants of All who were really unable to provide for the neceſſities of Life by Honeſt Labour. But indeed, hardly any thing is more difficult, in an idle and corrupt Age, than for thoſe who have the ſtrongeſt *Inclinations* as well as the greateſt *Abilities* of doing Acts of Beneficence, to find out in *what manner*, and upon *what Objects* in particular, they may beſt beſtow their charitable good Offices; ſo as that the Uſe and Benefit of them

them may be the *moſt* extenſive, and the *leaſt* liable to miſapplication or Abuſe. Nor is it poſſible in This caſe, to lay down any certain and determinate *Rules*. Every perſon, as he muſt of neceſſity be left to the determination of his own prudence, at *what* particular *Times* and *Places*, and in *what proportions* he will chooſe to beſtow his Charity; ſo muſt he alſo in judging about the *Manner* of diſpoſing it, and upon *what Objects*, and with *what particular Views* he will principally direct it; that it may more immediately anſwer the *intention* of the Giver, and may be *moſt* conducive to the *particular Purpoſes* he is chiefly deſirous to promote. According to the *different* Stations of Life men have been employed in, and the *different* Scenes of humane affairs they have ſeen in the World; they are apt naturally in conſequence to frame to themſelves very different notions, what *Kinds* of charities will in the whole be moſt uſeful to the Publick, and moſt likely to anſwer the general Intention with

Succeſs. In *every* Method that *has* or *can be* propoſed, when conſidered under *different Views and Regards*, it cannot be otherwiſe, but that *Each one* will be found liable *in Some Reſpects* to *more* Objections than others, and *in Some* to *fewer*. *Whatever* Way be taken, and *whatever* care and circumſpection men uſe, in the diſpoſal of their Charity; it will always be poſſible, that the End they propoſe to themſelves ſhall not be fully anſwered; And in *no way* can there be any certain and abſolute ſecurity, that every ſort of miſcarriage ſhall be prevented. That which of all other methods ſeems, upon the whole, to have the *Advantage* in *moſt reſpects*; as being moſt *extenſive* in its *Influence*, and *laſting* in its *Effects*; ſubject to the *Feweſt Inconveniences*, and *thoſe* from time to time the moſt eaſily *remedied*; is the *Education of Poor Children*. Which, when put in a right Method, and directed in a right and proper manner; is in effect a Compendium of almoſt every ſort and kind of Charity, of

almoſt

almoſt all the ſeveral and moſt different Inſtances of Beneficence in One. 'Tis, at the ſame time, both Feeding the Hungry, and cloathing the Naked with a Garment. 'Tis inſtructing the Ignorant in the firſt principles of Religion, and promoting a general Senſe and Knowledge of God in the World. 'Tis ſowing early the Seeds of Virtue and good Manners, and preventing the firſt Beginnings of thoſe vitious Habits, which, when they have taken root by Cuſtom and long Practiſe, ſeldom Any Zeal for reformation of Manners is ever after able to correct. 'Tis, when joined with putting them upon works of *Labour* and *Induſtry*, as it ought always to be; 'tis then (I ſay) a remedy againſt all the ill Effects of Idleneſs and Poverty, and (by a *Double* Benefit) making Thoſe to become Uſeful Members of the Publick, who would otherwiſe have been a Burden and a Weight upon it. In a word, 'tis at once relieving the neceſſities of the Preſent Generation, and (as far as Humane Care and

Foreſight can extend,) preventing the Wants of Thoſe which are to come. To *This ſort* of Charity therefore, (whenever there is *reaſonable* Ground to hope it will be duly applied to the Purpoſes now mentioned,) we are exhorted by *All* thoſe arguments *in conjunction*, which *ſingly* incite us to be beneficent in Any of the Particular Inſtances. To this we are invited by all the conſiderations of Publick Benefit, and by all the Motives and Arguments of Religion. To This we are incouraged by the united Force of all thoſe Promiſes *at once*, which in Scripture are made, on many *different* occaſions, to the *ſeveral* methods of ſhowing mercy and charity.

It has upon ſome occaſions been obſerved, and perhaps not always wholly without reaſon; that the children of the *Meaneſt* parents, ſuſtained, educated, and inſtructed merely upon the Charity of Others; have ſometimes in conſequence of theſe Advantages, and upon account of

This

This very inſtruction, been tempted to become *conceited* and *vain*, and *Above* being imployed in thoſe *Meaner Services*, which are of all others the *moſt neceſſary*, and at the ſame time the *moſt uſeful* to the Publick: And ſometimes that they have become liable to be led away into *Factions*, which, being frequently founded upon Pretenſes of Religion, do find very great Support from whatever is capable of being changed into the *Ceremonies* and *Formalities* of *Superſtition*. In order to remedy, as far as poſſible, theſe Inconveniencies, and to turn Objects of Charity into uſeful Members of the Publick; to inſtruct them in the plaineſt Principles of Sobriety and Virtue; and to inure them to Labour and Induſtry, which is the Great Support of every Nation; It has been reſolved that the poor Children to be ſupported by *your* Charity, ſhall for the future (and the Deſign is already begun actually to be put in execution) be imployed the greateſt part of their time in ſuch *Kinds* of *Work*, as may qualify them for the

the *lower* and *moſt neceſſary Services* of Life. And to This End proviſion has been made, that they ſhall *not only* be *cloathed* and *taught* as formerly, but that they ſhall be furniſhed moreover with *Food* and *Lodging*; that, being conſtantly kept together in a Place of *Work* and Imployment, the propoſed Intention may be more effectually anſwered; and the Inconveniencies, which it has perhaps not unjuſtly been apprehended would follow upon their being raiſed *Above* their proper Station, we may reaſonably *hope*, will in great meaſure be prevented.

One evident and very obvious good effect of This Method, is; that whereas, when children have only been *Taught* in Schools, it too often happens that by returning conſtantly home to their Parents or Relations, the Principles of Religion and good Manners wherein they have been inſtructed, have from time to time been as it were *extinguiſhed* by the influence of *ill Examples*, and overpowered by the

the continual Sight of *vicious Practiſes*; they will Now, as far as poſſible, be kept out of that danger of being led away by ill Example; and, in a good degree, out of the reach of the contagion, of the moſt profligate and diſſolute part of the World. For Vice is not *natural* to mankind, but taught by ill Education and corrupt Examples, confirmed by Cuſtom and Habit, and Then indeed very hard to be rooted out by the Strongeſt Arguments or by the Wiſeſt Inſtructions. For, that which has long been *crooked*, will not eaſily be *made ſtreight*; *and that which is wanting, cannot be numbred*, Eccl. i, 15. But if young perſons can *from the Beginning* be kept out of ill Company, and be taught only the *plain* Principles of Religion and Virtue, and be inured to *Induſtry* and moderate *Labour*; they will eaſily be formed to *Habits* of Sobriety and Modeſty, to a ſenſe of the reaſonableneſs of virtuous Living, and to a Hatred of thoſe vicious and debauched Practiſes, which bring ſo great a part of Mankind *viſibly* to *Temporal*

poral, and *too certainly* to *Eternal* Deſtruction.

And whereas *Poor Orphans particularly,* who are left wholly deſtitute of Friends and Relations, are apt to be expoſed not only to the Diſadvantages of ignorance and want of inſtruction, and to the ſeducements of ill Company in the worſt and loweſt part of a looſe and degenerate World, but very frequently alſo to lie under the greateſt *Temporal* Wants, and be ſubject to ſuch a variety of *Hardſhips* and *Oppreſſions*, as often render them almoſt *incapable* of Any uſeful Employment in the World; By the Method now propoſed, *Theſe Objects* in particular, as they will probably be more *Willing than Others* to *ſubmit* to ſuch a manner of Education as may beſt fit them for the *meaneſt* and moſt neceſſary *Services*, ſo *Theſe* ('tis likely) will be the *principal and moſt numerous* Sharers in your preſent Beneficence. Which is one not inconſiderable additional recommendation,

mendation, of the design of turning Charity into this particular Channel.

The Provision *now* made for accommodating the poor children with *Food* and *Lodging*, who *before* were only *Cloathed* and *Taught*; must indeed of necessity cause a considerable *Increase* of the Annual *Expense*. But if there be good reason to *hope*, (as there plainly is in the Nature of the Thing,) that the *Accession of Usefulness to the Charity* by this method, will in proportion be greater than the *Increase of the Expense*; this is a very just argument to prevail with well-disposed persons, to inlarge their contributions. *Every man, according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful Giver.——As it is written; he hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the poor, his righteousness remaineth for ever.—Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth thro' Us Thanksgiving to* 2 Cor. ix. 7.

God. For the adminiſtration of This Service, not only ſupplieth the Wants of the Saints, but is abundant alſo by many Thankſgivings unto God: Whilſt by the experiment of this miniſtration, they glorify God for your profeſſed Subjection unto the Goſpel of Chriſt, and for your liberal Diſtribution unto Them, and unto all Men.

FINIS.

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